

## **Measuring the Effect Teacher Absenteeism Has on Student Achievement at A “Urban but not too urban:” Title I Elementary School**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper will address the effect that teacher absenteeism has on academic achievement in grades 3-6 in a selected elementary school in Montgomery, Alabama. Using SAT 10 scores from this school, a spreadsheet will be created dividing teachers into top and bottom in reference to teacher absenteeism and student achievement on the SAT 10 for each particular year under review. This spreadsheet will be used as a guide to show the relationship between student performances, SAT 10, and teacher absenteeism. Data will be reported in descriptive statistics (which will include some frequencies, percent, means and standard deviation). (1) Does teacher absenteeism effect student achievement in grades 3-6 on the SAT 10 comprehension assessment in reading and math? (2) Do students in a classroom eventually lose the desire to learn when the regular teacher is frequently absent and the delivery of the instruction is by an array of substitute teachers? (3) Is there a significant gap between elementary students in grades 3-6 in SAT 10 reading and math score?*

### **Introduction**

Professional literature contends that in today’s schools, too many children struggle with reading and math. As many teachers and community leaders will attest, reading failure has exacted a huge long-term consequence for children’s self-esteem and becoming productive citizens and lifelong learners.

Dorward 2000, states that teacher absenteeism has a direct impact on student achievement. Current trends of teacher absenteeism seriously disrupt the learning environment of the classroom. Shortage of substitute teachers nationwide is a problem that is further pushed to the extreme. In a recent study, nearly 60% of school districts were found not having qualified substitute teachers available when teachers are absent from work.

Highly qualified teachers who are absent and having unqualified substitute teachers who are available or not does have a direct impact on student’s retention of knowledge. In other words, having a highly qualified classroom teacher is better for the classroom learning environment. All available research should be done to find ways to keep teacher satisfaction high and absenteeism low.

By 2014, the NCLB Act requires that all students are proficient in reading and math. This study will recommend strategies to help meet this goal, as one crucial part of a larger plan.

### **Review of the Literature**

This chapter is dedicated to the review of the literature on teacher absenteeism, its components, and its effect on student achievement in grades 3-6 in a selected school in Montgomery, Alabama. The subtopics related to be discussed are as follows: Teacher Absenteeism, student performance on SAT 10, and the NCLB Act.

Several studies have found that there is a correlation between teacher attendance and student achievement, especially in those schools ranked with average student achievement. Student achievement is also affected in schools ranked both high and low as well when teacher absenteeism is over 7.5% (Madden, Flanigan, Richardson, 1991).

### **Teacher Absenteeism**

Current teacher absenteeism averages between 8-10% (Staffing Industry Report, 1999; Ramirez, 1996; Warren, 1988). This equals to over one full year of every child's elementary education being taught by a substitute teacher. Substitute teachers do not always measure up to the regular classroom teacher's routine and methods to stimulate students to learn (Darling-Hammond, 1995; St. Michel, 1995). One statewide study indicated 71% of personnel directors deemed absenteeism as one of the leading problems in schools (Norton, 1998). Additional research suggests that economically disadvantaged students who desperately need continuity of instruction get it least (Pitkoff, 1993).

A report by the Pennsylvania School Board association (1978) stated, "Studies indicate substitute teachers are not as effective in the classroom as regular teachers because of the lack of continuity in the educational program." An alarming finding is that teacher absenteeism and substitute teaching may be highest in those school districts that need the consistent attendance of permanent teachers the most. In schools where students are poorest and failing the most academically, teachers tend to be absent more often. In one study, the percentage of students reading below grade level was found to be the greatest predictor of school employee absenteeism, followed by the percentage of students eligible to receive free lunch. (Pitkoff, 1993).

A study by Manlove and Elliott (1977) found that the overall performance of a school was negatively affected by high teacher absenteeism. In their study, the rating of a school, on a number of both academic and administrative dimensions, declined with increased teacher absenteeism. Newer research has found a correlation between teacher attendance and student achievement. In a 1997 study involving third grade classes, teachers who had the greatest number of absences, individual standardized test scores were lowered, student rank in class was lowered, and over all school scores were down as a result of frequent absences (Jacobs and Kritsonis, 1997). Woods and Montagno (1997) purport, that the teacher attendance rate has a negative effect on student achievement. The study looked at students in grade three in schools in the states of Indiana and Wyoming. They discovered that in classes where teachers had the greatest number of absences, individual standardized test scores were lowered, student rank in class was lowered, and over all school scores were down as a result of frequent absences.

The most cited absenteeism model that is used in a multitude of studies on teacher absenteeism was the Steers and Rhodes' (1978) model. They used a multi- variable approach that encompasses psychological as well as personal characteristics of teachers. Based on the ideas of Steer and Rhodes (1978), demographic variables such as personal and family-related characteristics are slated as well as psychological variables such as job satisfaction, motivation to be absent, and the ability to attend work. The model emphasizes that attendance is highly influenced by the practices of the organization, an absence of school culture, and employee attitudes, values, and goals. The number one factor identified by Steers and Rhodes was job satisfaction.

Yolles, et al. (1975) contend that 90% of absenteeism is caused by 10% of the workforce.

Based on the research of Unicomb et. al (1992), gender and life stage plays an important part in determining the profiles of teachers who are absent from the instructional environment. It was discovered that female teachers tend to be absent more as they increased with age. Male teachers were out more days in their thirties than at any other time in their teaching career.

In another study by Scott and McClellan (1990), male teachers tend to miss fewer days than women by a ratio of 3.39 days to 5.29 days per academic year. Additionally, elementary school teachers missed far more days of work than secondary school teachers by a ratio of 6.63 days to 3.32 days. Secondary school employees tend to remain at work more.

Unicomb et. al (1992) found that Wednesdays were missed more than any day per week and that Mondays had the fewest number of days missed from work. A common misconception is that employees will miss work on Friday. The research indicates that teachers tend to stay at school in anticipation for the weekend.

In a study by Pitkoff (1993), teachers who received low performance markings tend to miss a larger number of days than those who did not. Teachers with low marks do not feel a connection to the workplace and believe that they are ineffective in the classroom. This gives an impetus for school administrators to develop teacher growth plans early in the academic year for low performing teachers than later in the year.

Scott and McClellan (1990) write that the school level taught and the level of the teaching license was two primary predictors of teacher absences. Through their investigation, it was discovered that the higher the degree obtained by the teacher, the higher the number of days they were absent from the classroom. Elementary teachers missed the most days.

Bruno (2002) purports that “when there is a high teacher absence, it tends to lower the morale of remaining teachers resulting in high teacher turnover” (p.1). Other teachers tend to feel more burdened because they may have to plan for the teacher who is absent. In addition to teacher morale, urban teachers tend to become frustrated with poor resource allocations in their schools and tend to desire to disconnect from the inner city campus with high rates of minority children whose families are labeled as low-income. Because of this, Bruno (2002) emphasizes that “teaching at low-income area schools increases the propensity of teachers to be absent”

According to a 2006 study in North Carolina, rural, urban, and suburban districts were analyzed and it was determined that each 10 days of teacher absence reduced “student achievement by one or two percent of a standard deviation.

The financial costs of teacher absenteeism costs primarily associated with substitute teacher salaries and expenses required to maintain a substitute teaching pool are a major concern (Ehrenberg and Rees, 1991). In a recent analysis of the costs of substitute teacher pay, three individual school districts in northern Indiana were surveyed. The results showed that nearly 1% of the total operating budget for these school districts was consumed by substitute teacher costs (Wood, 1996). It is not uncommon for average size districts to spend millions for substitute teachers. Kanawha County School District in West Virginia spent \$6.4 million for substitute teachers last year, with an average teacher absenteeism rate of 8.3%. Kanawha County has 29,000 students, 2,150 instructional staff, and a substitute pool of 275 (Eyre, 2000).

Absenteeism is a complete loss to the educational system. According to The District Management Council (2004), “teachers average approximately two weeks out of the classroom per year due to sick days, personal days, and other excused absences” and “districts pay for substitute salaries, recruiting, administrative tasks, and absent teacher salaries.” Nationally, based on findings from the same study using NCEES statistics from 2000, the total cost of teacher absenteeism is \$25.2 billion dollars. Considering the costs associated with teacher absenteeism, it is critical to actively address the issue. Before any action is taken to address teacher absenteeism, the problem should be carefully addressed. Next, a comprehensive plan of action should be taken to lower teacher absenteeism.

A district can determine the extent of its teacher absenteeism problem by looking at such factors as:

- Job dissatisfaction,
- teacher burnout, and
- decrease in teacher morale.

Once the problem of teacher absenteeism has been assessed in a particular school or school district, a comprehensive plan of action should be created. To implement a comprehensive and systematic attendance improvement program consider the following:

- review board policy,
- appoint an attendance improvement coordinator
- construct attendance guidelines
- buyback of unused sick leave should be considered
- develop an attendance recognition plan
- discuss sick leave use and abuse with employees
- improve work conditions
- provide an incentive for experienced teachers who volunteer for assignments in failing schools, and

- hold administrators accountable for administering policies and site administrators for any abuse of the policies (Lewis, 1981 and Norton, 1998).

Alleviating teacher burnout can contribute to lowering teacher absenteeism. One of the highest predictors of teacher absenteeism is the percentage of students reading below grade level followed by the percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch (Pitkoff, 1993). Such circumstances may contribute to teacher burnout. When absenteeism is related to teacher burnout consider:

- Helping individual teachers identify short term signposts of progress in meeting their own and the school's improvement goals,
- rotating teachers' classroom assignments so as to ensure that the same teachers do not always have, year after year, difficult students, and
- provide adequate financial and material resources.

Increasing teacher morale is a substantial factor in increasing teacher attendance. There are several factors that contribute to high morale in a work environment. Teachers must feel they are:

- Treated fairly and equally
- valued and appreciated for their work
- recognized for their work
- paid a fair wage for their work, and
- doing work that is important.

In recent years, a variety of strategies throughout school districts have been implemented to reduce teacher absenteeism.

#### **The Merrick School District**

The Merrick School District in Long Island, New York, used an awareness program to successfully reduce teacher absenteeism. The emphasis was a professional approach toward making all employees aware of the problem. By setting attendance goals and closely monitoring adherence to those goals were being met on an individual basis, the absentee rate was cut in half (Gendler, 1977).

#### **King William County School District**

The King William County School District in King William, Virginia, used a salary supplement to successfully reduce absenteeism. The district offered a \$2,000 salary supplement for teachers missing three or fewer days during the preceding year (Stainback & Winborne, 1984).

#### **Sugar Hill Central School District**

In Sugar Hill, New York, the Sugar Hill Central School District used a small salary supplement combined with recognition to successfully reduce teacher absenteeism. The district reduced the average rate from 7.24 days in 1985-86 to 5.90 days in 1986-87, a decline of 18.5% per teacher. The salary bonus represented a 1.08% pay increase for perfect attendance (Jacobson, 1989).

#### **Des Moines, Iowa**

In Des Moines, Iowa, schools recently negotiated the option to convert unused sick leave into retirement benefits, cash, or health insurance benefits. Some other schools have paid out the personal leave days not used in cash if the employee requested it (Smith, 1999).

#### **Student Performance on SAT 10**

Standardized testing is a subject that many people feel strongly about. Most people either think that it is the best way to assess students' abilities or it is a stress-invoking nightmare for everyone involved.

However, if you step back and look at it objectively, it becomes clear that it is neither. Standardized testing has both positive and negative aspects and when used effectively can play a significant role in bettering the education of our students. The key, of course, is using the results effectively (American Educational Research Association, 1999).

### Positive Aspects of Standardized Testing

- Standardized testing gives teachers guidance to help them determine *what* to teach students and *when* to teach it. The net result is less wasted instructional time and a simplified way of timeline management.
- Standardized testing allows students' progress to be tracked over the years. When students take the same type of test yearly (adjusted for grade level) it is easy to see if a student is improving, losing ground academically, or staying about the same. (For example, if a child is taking a norm-referenced test and scores in the 75th percentile in the sixth grade and the 80th percentile in the seventh grade, you can see that the child is gaining ground in school.) This helps determine how a child is doing academically.
- Since all students in a school are taking the same test (with respect to grade level) standardized tests provide an accurate comparison across groups. (For example, this makes it easy to see how boys are performing as compared to girls in a particular school or district.) Over the years great improvements have been made with regards to test bias, which has led to more accurate assessments and comparisons.

### Negative Aspects of Standardized Testing

- Many teachers are (unjustly) accused of teaching to the test. Most do not do this, but some feel so much pressure for their students to achieve a specific score that they *do* end up teaching to the test, whether they want to or not. This can make school drudgery for students and steal teachers' enjoyment of teaching.
- Standardized tests can place a huge amount of stress on students and teachers alike. This can lead to negative health consequences as well as feelings of negativity directed at school and learning in general.
- As much as test creators try to do away with testing bias, it may be impossible to rid tests of it altogether. I once tutored a 5<sup>th</sup> grader who did not know what a recipe was. If a standardized test was to ask questions directed at a recipe, that child would have been at a huge disadvantage because most fifth grade students know and have had at least some experience dealing with recipes, but she did not. There is just no way to know for certain that every child being tested has a fair amount of knowledge going into the test.

### No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

On June 10, 2003, President Bush announced that every state had to have an accountability plan in place that strives to achieve the goals set forth by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA). When President Bush took office, only 11 states were in compliance. In fact, Alabama was one of the last of the 17 states to have their accountability plan approved by the federal government. Under the plan Alabama had to describe how every student would achieve academic regardless of the academic or economic level of the student (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Alabama, along with the other 49 states, was responsible for submitting an annual progress report every summer between 2003 and 2006 to document the state's progress in meeting the requirement of every child being taught by a highly qualified teacher (Education News in Alabama, 2003a). The Alabama Association of School Administrators estimated that 15% of the current teachers in the state do not meet the highly qualified standards; it was originally predicted that 40% of the current teachers would not meet the standards (Education News in Alabama, 2003b). Of these estimated 15%, there are two groups. The first group is comprised of teachers who are not teaching in their field. The second group identifies those who lack one or two college credits in their core subject area (Education News in Alabama, 2003c).

Unfortunately, many teachers in Alabama are under-certified. In Mobile County alone, approximately one-third of the teachers are under-certified. In fact, Mobile County employs 4,000 teachers and 1,500 of these teachers are considered under-certified. Also, the middle schools are facing tremendous problems. The state requires teachers to complete 33 semester hours of college credit in the subject they are teaching. Many middle school teachers hold a general education certification; therefore, they do not meet requirements in Alabama to be considered highly qualified. If these teachers worked in an elementary school they might be considered highly qualified. Two problems identified with the middle schools are that many are departmentalized and teachers are responsible for a variety of subjects (Catalanello, 2003; Havner, 2003).

Recently, Alabama received additional funding to ensure quality educational services. In 2003, Alabama received \$722.3 million to aid local schools, which is an increase of \$87 million over the previous year.

Title I funding increased to \$182 million which is an increase of \$34 million from the previous year. To support Alabama's goal to have highly qualified teachers in every classroom, the federal government is providing \$45.4 million to train and keep teachers in the classroom. To help recruit math and science teachers in Alabama, the state has offered a financial incentive for students majoring in education. If the student commits to teach either math or science in a high poverty school the student is eligible for additional financial aid. In the fall of 2002, the program had only 24 applicants but there are hopes that there will be increased interest in the program in the near future (Alabama Education News, 2003a). The federal government provides approximately \$4.5 million to after school programs for children who are found to be at risk and \$199.5 million is provided in the form of Pell grants to assist students from a poor economic background to attend college. Furthermore, according to the Bush White House, \$6.1 million has been provided to local school districts to assess students on their achievement level (Hough, 2003).

### **Problems with NCLB Standardized Tests**

Since states set their own standards and write their own standardized NCLB tests, states can compensate for inadequate student performance by setting very low standards and making tests unusually easy. Many contend that testing requirements for disabled and limited-English proficient students are unfair and unworkable. Critics allege that standardized tests contain cultural biases, and that educational quality can't necessarily be evaluated by objective testing.

### **Failure to Address Reasons for Lack of Achievement**

At its core, NCLB faults schools and curriculum for student failure, but critics claim that other factors are also to blame, including: class size, old and damaged school buildings, hunger and homelessness, teacher absenteeism, and lack of health care.

### **Methodology**

A descriptive correlational design method was employed for this study. The researcher examined data from SAT 10 assessments from 2006-2009 academic school years in reading and math in grades 3-6 to determine if teacher absenteeism had an impact in the assessment results. Next, the researcher reviewed the number of days teachers were absent and its effect on whether students met proficiency requirements for reading and math. Also, the researcher examined the selected elementary school absenteeism in reading and math scores to Title I teacher absenteeism data.

The focus of this study is primarily on grades 3-6 at McKee Elementary School and aimed at the effect that teacher absenteeism has on student achievement. A detailed spreadsheet will be developed as a guide to show the relationship between student performances, SAT 10, and teacher absenteeism. The writer was particularly interested in the possible effect that teacher absenteeism has on student achievement because many classrooms seem to be dominated by substitute teachers, leaving the results of student achievement dangling in the air.

### **Design of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect that teacher absenteeism has on student achievement in grades 3-6 in a selected school in Montgomery, Alabama starting from 2006 through 2009 academic school years. Using SAT 10 scores from this school; a spreadsheet will be created which divides teachers into top and bottom to make a correlation between teacher absenteeism and student performance in SAT 10 for each particular year under review. This spreadsheet will be used as a guide to show the relationship between student performances, SAT 10, and teacher absenteeism. Data will be reported in descriptive statistics (which will include some frequencies, percent, means, and standard deviation).

### **Population**

The population will consist of the students at McKee Elementary School in grades 3-6. McKee Elementary School is located in Montgomery, Alabama, which is considered a Title I school.

### **Instrumentation**

The instruments that will be used to conduct this particular study is a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet will correlate the number of days the teacher is out to the SAT 10 assessment scores. This spreadsheet will be used to determine the effect that teacher absenteeism has on student achievement in grades 3-6.

This spreadsheet will also be used as a guide to show the relationship between student performances, SAT 10, and teacher absenteeism.

### **Data Collection**

The principal of McKee Elementary School gave the researcher permission to conduct this study at McKee Elementary School. The researcher gathered all data from the 2006-2009 teacher absenteeism report and compared it to the schools SAT 10 assessment scores.

Upon collecting the data, the researcher used the SAT 10 scores from the school and created a spreadsheet which divides teachers into top and bottom to make a correlation between teacher absenteeism and student performance in SAT 10 for each particular year under review. The researcher coded the data Faculty A, B, C, D so to be anonymous and easily identifiable.

### **Research Design**

The researcher employed a quantitative research design using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics are techniques for describing and summarizing data in abbreviated, symbolic form; shorthand symbols for describing large amounts of data. This research design was effective because the study population was not at risk and took precautions with teacher attendance data and student's 3-6 SAT 10 reading and math performance, because all information was kept confidential and the researcher was mindful of teacher individuals.

Also, the steps that were taken to minimize or eliminate the risks that might have been involved with the collection of the data, was only discussed with the appropriate administrators and ASU faculty only. The data was coded Faculty A, B, C, D so that it was kept anonymous and no risk of disclosure of information would be involved.

The researcher gathered all data from the 2006-2009 teacher absenteeism report and compared it to the SAT 10 assessment scores. Upon collecting the data, the researcher used the SAT 10 scores from the school and created a spreadsheet which divides teachers into top and bottom to make a correlation between teacher absenteeism and student performance in SAT 10 for each particular year under review.

### **Portrait of Researched School**

The researcher created a portrait of the research site to provide additional descriptive information of the process. McKee Elementary school is a relatively new structure in the Montgomery Public School System. It is less than ten years old and built to house approximately 600 students. In the years of this study 2006-2009, the population was 560.1 and decreased to 547.3. This is indicative of Title I schools who do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) all three years and students had the right to transfer to schools who met AYP.

The percentage of students who applied for free and reduced lunch and those who were approved during this three year study were 83.6% and it increased to 89.3%, which is an indicator of poverty in this particular area.

Furthermore, as it relates to teacher qualifications, we would like to take a moment and look at the teachers who are holding each level of certification as issued by the Alabama Department of Education for 2008-2009 school year. The teachers in this study who held a Bachelor's Degree (Class B) were 29.5%; Master's Degree (Class A) 59.1% and or Six Year through Doctorate (Class AA) 11.4%.

Using SAT 10 scores from this school; a spreadsheet has been created below dividing teachers into top and bottom in reference to teacher absenteeism and student achievement on the SAT 10 for each particular year under review. This spreadsheet will be used as a guide to show the relationship between student performances, SAT 10, and teacher absenteeism. Data will be reported in descriptive statistics (which will include some frequencies, percent, means and standard deviation).

**Table 1: Grade 3 Reading and Math**

Class	Teacher Absence	Total			Total		
		Students Reading	Proficient Reading	%Proficient Reading	Students Math	Proficient Math	%Proficient Math
<b><u>2006-2007</u></b>							
Teacher A	15	20	15	75.0%	21	14	66.7%
Teacher B	18	21	17	81.0%	21	18	85.7%
Teacher C	13	21	15	71.4%	21	17	81.0%
Teacher D	4	20	13	65.0%	20	12	60.0%
<b><u>2007-2008</u></b>							
Teacher A	28	20	7	35.0%	20	9	45.0%
Teacher B	12.5	20	10	50.0%	20	10	50.0%
Teacher C	18	18	6	33.3%	18	6	33.3%
<b><u>2008-2009</u></b>							
Teacher A	12	16	7	43.8%	16	12	75.0%
Teacher B	8	19	12	63.2%	19	13	68.4%
Teacher C	13	18	11	61.1%	18	14	77.8%
Teacher D	14.5	19	13	68.4%	19	12	63.2%

In making comparisons for Tables 1-4, only two years of data was used in order to compare the same set of teachers for both years. For the academic school years 2006-2007 in table 1, Teacher A, C, and D were used for analysis.

In order for a good Title I school to be proficient, there must be a 70% proficiency level or higher in reading and math.

Looking at Tables 1-4, the teacher absence, the percent proficient in reading, and the percent proficient in math were added and divided by three in order to acquire the total average of teacher absence and the total percent proficient in reading and math for the grade level as a whole. For third grade for the academic year 2006-2007, 15.3 of the teacher's as a whole were absent that year with 75.8% of the students being proficient in reading and 77.8% being of the students being proficient in math, having over 70% proficient.

In the academic year 2007-2008, 19.5 teacher's were absent as a whole, increasing four more days than the previous academic year. The third graders for that year scored 39.4% proficient in reading and 42.76% proficient in math. Having the teacher absence increasing four days made a difference in the proficiency level of the student's reading and math scores, lowering the test scores tremendously.



**Table 2: Grade 4 Reading and Math**

Class	Teacher Absence	Total Students Reading	Proficient Reading	%Proficient Reading	Total Students Math	Proficient Math	%Proficient Math
<b>2006-2007</b>							
Teacher A	3	28	19	67.9%	28	22	78.6%
Teacher B	11	30	21	70.0%	30	21	70.0%
Teacher C	9	29	19	65.5%	29	19	65.5%
<b>2007-2008</b>							
Teacher A	9	26	17	65.4%	26	17	65.4%
Teacher B	15	26	18	69.2%	26	16	61.5%
Teacher C	7	24	11	45.8%	24	14	58.3%
<b>2008-2009</b>							
Teacher A	9	28	15	53.6%	28	13	46.4%
Teacher B	14	27	16	59.3%	27	13	48.1%
Teacher C	23.5	27	15	55.6%	27	18	66.7%

In grade 4 reading and math, 2007-2009 academic years were used for comparisons. In 2007-2008 academic year, using table 2 for data comparison, 10.34 of the fourth grade teacher's as a whole were absent, leaving 60.14% proficient in reading and 61.74% proficient in math.

In 2008-2009 academic year, 15.5 of the fourth grade teachers were absent and 56.17 of the students were proficient in reading and 53.74 of the students were proficient in math. In both academic years, the student's did not achieve 70% in reading and math. However, it seems as though the higher the teacher absence, the lower the proficiency percent becomes.

**Table 3: Grade 5 Reading and Math**

Class	Teacher Absence	Total Students Reading	Proficient Reading	%Proficient Reading	Total Students Math	Proficient Math	%Proficient Math
<b>2006-2007</b>							
Teacher A	5	27	13	48.1%	27	19	70.4%
Teacher B	0	26	13	50.0%	26	15	57.7%
Teacher C	15	28	7	25.0%	28	15	53.6%
<b>2007-2008</b>							
Teacher A	9.5	19	10	52.6%	19	14	73.7%
Teacher B	7	18	7	38.9%	18	13	72.2%
Teacher C	4	18	11	61.1%	18	14	77.8%
Teacher D	8.5	16	9	56.3%	16	10	62.5%
<b>2008-2009</b>							
Teacher A	15	29	17	58.6%	29	18	62.1%
Teacher B	8.5	28	16	57.1%	28	16	57.1%
Teacher C	34.5	30	17	56.7%	30	16	53.3%

For table 3, 2007-2009 academic years will be used and Teacher C for the academic year 2007-2008 will be excluded. In 2007-2008 academic year as a whole, 18.34 of the fifth grade teachers were absent and 49.27% of the students were proficient in reading and 69.47% of the students were proficient in math.

In 2008-2009 academic year, 19.34 of the fifth grade teachers were absent as a whole and 57.47% of the students were proficient in reading and 57.50 of the students were proficient in math. In both years, 70% proficiency level was not met.

**Table 4: Grade 6 Reading and Math**

Class	Teacher Absence	Total Students Reading	Proficient Reading	%Proficient Reading	Total Students Math	Proficient Math	%Proficient Math
<b>2006-2007</b>							
Teacher A	17	27	20	74.1%	27	27	100.0%
Teacher B	17	27	13	48.1%	27	14	51.9%
Teacher C	14	28	16	57.1%	28	13	46.4%
<b>2007-2008</b>							
Teacher A	19	23	15	65.2%	23	15	65.2%
Teacher B	23	24	16	66.7%	24	12	50.0%
Teacher C	9	24	16	66.7%	24	13	54.2%
<b>2008-2009</b>							
Teacher A	10	21	19	90.5%	21	19	90.5%
Teacher B	3.5	20	17	85.0%	20	18	90.0%
Teacher C	6	20	13	65.0%	20	15	75.0%

For table 4, 2006-2008 academic years will be examined. In 2006-2007, the teacher absence for sixth grade as a whole was 16 and 59.77% of the student's were proficient in reading and 66.10% of the student's were proficient in math.

Looking at table 4 for the 2007-2008 academic year, 17 teacher's were absent as a whole and 66.20% of the student's were proficient in reading and 56.47% of the student's were proficient in math. In both years, 70% proficiency level was not met as well.

### ***Conclusion and Recommendation***

The summative findings indicate that teacher absenteeism can be detrimental to student's education and levels of individual attainment.

In regards to table 1 particularly, the third grade teacher's absence was 15.3 as a whole and the student's scored over 70% proficiency.

For grades 3-6, the higher the teacher's absence, the lower the student's achievement in reading and math became.

Teacher's should reduce their absence to no more than 10 days a school year in order for student's to be effective and proficiency level in reading and math to be above 70%.

### **Discussion/Implications**

The purpose of this study if at any is to measure the effect teacher absenteeism has on student achievement in grades 3-6 in a selected elementary school.

The following implications for practice are offered based on the findings of this research:

1. Students may benefit from teacher not being absent more than 10 days out of the school year.
2. Data can be used to help the central office of Montgomery Public Schools better understand the effect of student achievement by implementing strategies that will keep teachers in Title I Schools present.
3. This research can be used to better understand the relationship between highly qualified teachers and students.

### **Recommendations**

The results of this study prompt the discussion of the following possible topics for further research:

1. This study could be replicated in other Title I Schools in the Montgomery Public School System. A comparison of the findings could determine absenteeism effects at the given Title I Schools.
2. This study could be replicated in other states outside of the state of Alabama. It also could determine the differences outside of this state.
3. This study could be extended to include more variables including but not limited to gender, age, teacher education level, and administrator education level.

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